

The MassINC Polling Group Trend Monitor is published once a quarter to provide a snapshot of how key metrics from our statewide polling are changing over time. The figures contained in the Trend Monitor are based on polls¹ conducted by The MassINC Polling Group.

State Right Direction / Wrong Track

Massachusetts residents are split over whether the Bay State is headed in the right direction or off on the wrong track. In the July 2011 poll, a plurality of Massachusetts residents said the state is on the wrong track rather than headed in the right direction, a first since the 2010 elections.

	Right Direction / Wrong Track
Oct 2011	44 / 45
Jul 2011	44 / 49
Apr 2011	47 / 41
Jan 2011	48 / 42
Sep 2010	41 / 47

Favorables - People and Groups

About a third (32%) of Massachusetts residents see Elizabeth Warren favorably (34% among registered voters), just over twice as many as see her unfavorably among each group. Senator Brown's favorability numbers have shown little movement over the last three surveys, and he maintains a positive favorable/unfavorable ratio. The Tea Party remains unpopular, with 28% saying they view the group favorably and 42% unfavorably.

Favorable / Unfavorable Ratios

	Deval Patrick	Scott Brown	John Kerry	Elizabeth Warren	The Tea Party
Oct 2011	51 / 36	47 / 30	53 / 29	32 / 14	28 / 42
Jul 2011	47 / 40	48 / 30	NA	NA	26 / 45
Apr 2011	54 / 36	50 / 28	56 / 28	NA	29 / 47
Jan 2011	57 / 33	51 / 25	NA	NA	30 / 46
Sep 2010	42 / 45	57 / 24	59 / 31	NA	37 / 35

**Note: Totals do not add up to 100% due to "Don't know" and "Refused" responses. People and groups included in the favorables section are rotated.*

Massachusetts Index of Consumer Sentiment²

Massachusetts residents' economic outlook remains gloomy, both about the current state of the economy and the near future, matching national trends. The Massachusetts Index of Consumer Sentiment (ICS) was 59.6 for the quarter, close to the nationwide ICS value of 59.4 in September. The component poll questions which make up the ICS also moved only slightly this quarter (and mostly within the margin of error) from the sour outlook reported during the final days of the debt ceiling negotiations in July.

	MA Index of Consumer Sentiment	MA Index of Current Economic Conditions	MA Index of Consumer Expectations
Oct 2011	59.6	64.2	56.5
Jul 2011	59.4	64.5	56.1
Apr 2011	68.0	71.0	66.1
Jan 2011	73.3	72.8	73.7

The Massachusetts Index of Consumer Sentiment measures views of both current and future economic conditions. The ICS is made up two component indices, the Index of Current Economic Conditions, which measures present sentiments, and the Index of Consumer Expectations, which represents future prospects. The ICS is scaled such that the 1966 national ICS represents 100.

The questions shown below are the components of the Index of Consumer Sentiment.

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your family living there) are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?			
	Better off	The same	Worse off
Oct 2011	25	27	47
Jul 2011	25	24	49
Apr 2011	29	24	45
Jan 2011	27	27	45

Now looking ahead--do you think that a year from now you (and your family living there) will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same as now?			
	Better off	The same	Worse off
Oct 2011	21	54	18
Jul 2011	19	54	23
Apr 2011	25	52	20
Jan 2011	28	51	17

Now turning to business conditions in the country as a whole--do you think that during the next twelve months we'll have good times financially or bad times?			
	Good times	Mixed, or both good and bad times	Bad times
Oct 2011	22	8	62
Jul 2011	25	6	64
Apr 2011	35	7	53
Jan 2011	43	10	43

Looking ahead, which would you say is more likely--that in the country as a whole we'll have continuous good times during the next five years or so, or that we will have periods of widespread unemployment or depression?			
	Good times	Mixed, or both good and bad times	Widespread unemployment or depression
Oct 2011	22	9	62
Jul 2011	27	5	62
Apr 2011	32	8	55
Jan 2011	35	10	52


About the big things people buy for their homes--such as furniture, a refrigerator, stove, television, and things like that. Generally speaking, do you think now is a good or bad time for people to buy major household items?			
	Good time to buy	Mixed, or both good and bad time	Bad time to buy
Oct 2011	35	7	48
Jul 2011	38	6	49
Apr 2011	41	7	43
Jan 2011	45	9	40

**Note: Totals for this battery of questions do not add up to 100% due to "Don't know" and "Refused" responses.*

Questions or comments?

Phone: (617) 224-1647

Email: info@massincpolling.com

 @MassINCPolling

¹ **About the Polls** - These results are based on questions from The MassINC Polling Group statewide polls of Massachusetts residents. Live telephone interviews are conducted via both landline and cell phone using conventional random digit dialing (RDD) sampling methods. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish by Eastern Research Services. Question wording and additional methodological details are available upon request, but are excluded from this document for simplicity and length.

² **About the Index of Consumer Sentiment** - The national Index of Consumer Sentiment is a consumer confidence index published monthly by the University of Michigan and Thomson Reuters. The ICS is made up two component indices, the Index of Current Economic Conditions, which measures present sentiments, and the Index of Consumer Expectations, which represents future prospects. The consumer confidence measures were devised in the late 1940's by George Katona at the University of Michigan. The measures have now developed into an ongoing, nationally representative survey based on telephonic household interviews. The Index of Consumer Sentiment (ICS) is developed from these interviews. The Index of Consumer Expectations (a sub-index of ICS) is included in the Leading Indicator Composite Index published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.